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SUBJECT: FAC POINTS FOR JANUARY 25TH MEETING DELIVERED

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Barbara A. Leaf, Reasons 1.
4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (U) Poloff spoke with Ministry officials about the Foreign Affairs Committee points in advance of the January 25th Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) meeting.

Iran

¶2. (C) On Iran, poloff learned from both Gulf Office Director Stefano Queirolo Palmas and the European Correspondent Giorgio Aliberti that the EU prefers no statement or conclusions following the January 25th meeting. The reason both cited is that there have been "too many statements," and the action is now in New York. There will, however, be press lines.

Somalia

¶3. (SBU) On Somalia, Aliberti said the focus at the January 25 meeting will be on setting up an ESDP mission. The hope is to begin planning and to start training in Uganda by May 1.

¶4. (C) The GOI has made Somalia a top priority, within EU circles but also more broadly. FM Frattini recently completed an Africa tour, during which he met with Transitional Federal Government President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and discussed Somalia with Kenyan and Ethiopian leaders. Italian DG for Africa Morabito is in Washington this week reporting on the meeting, and FM Frattini will very likely raise Somalia when he meets with the Secretary in Washington on January 25. (See Rome Daily SIPR Report, January 21, 2010). PolMC and Poloff discussed Somalia with various Ministry officials in the aftermath of Frattini's trip. All interlocutors underlined the urgency Frattini feels about Somalia, and his view that Somalia and Yemen are two sides of a very bad coin.

¶5. (SBU) Frattini's office shared with us an MFA position paper outlining their strategy of "targeted advocacy" towards Somalia by pressing partners to disburse pledges made at the Brussels conference. Ongoing Italian security sector initiatives aim to train Somali "robust police forces, and border and custom police officers and include a pilot project to train the Coast Guard. The GOI also foresees support for the Ministry of Information and for Radio Mogadishu, in order to reinforce the GOS's ability to reach civil society. The MFA confirmed Italy's plan to reopen its embassy in Mogadishu, and calls on international organizations to take parallel steps.

Bosnia

¶6. (C) European Correspondent Giorgio Aliberti said that the EU will agree to launch a training mission at the January meeting, while maintaining the EUFOR Althea mission with no end date. Aliberti noted that there is a divide among countries who believe Althea should remain in place in an open-ended fashion and those who want to set an end date: the

Dutch, Slovaks, British and French fall into the former camp, while the Italians and Spanish, who have troops present, prefer to define an end date. The decision on Althea,s end date, Aliberti said, would be pushed until a spring meeting.

Afghanistan

17. (SBU) Aliberti noted that the UK has asked to review EU positions prior to the London conference. A key agenda item would be discussion of new names for a the proposed special EU representative for Afghanistan, with a goal of announcing the decision in London. MFA NATO Desk Officer Batori also confirmed that approximately 160 of the 200 pledged Carabinieri forces for enhanced police training are either already in Afghanistan or in the process of being deployed. The final Police Training Team is scheduled to be on the ground in the late spring.

Yemen

18. (SBU) Poloffs spoke with DG for the Middle East Luigi Marras (reported Rome 0089) and with Aliberti. Aliberti anticipates that there will be a statement on Yemen in the conclusions of the FAC meeting but did not believe there would be much in the way of substantive decisions.
THORNE